

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 044307

E.O. 11652:GDS

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SUBJECT: CLEARANCE REQUEST FOR NASA AIRCRAFT

1. IN SUPPORT OF ONGOING COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS AND AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE USG AND GOVERNMENT OF MEXICO (GOM) TO CURB ILLEGAL PRODUCTION AND TRAFFICKING IN NARCOTICS, NASA IS WORKING WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE TO DEVELOP AN ADVANCED AIRBORNE REMOTE SENSING SCANNER AND DATA PROCESSING SYSTEM TO IDENTIFY AND LOCATE ILLICIT PRODUCTION FIELDS AND TRAIN A TEAM OF MEXICAN TECHNICIANS TO OPERATE SYSTEM.

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2. TO ENHANCE SCANNER DEVELOPMENT EFFORT, ELIMINATE STUDY REQUIREMENTS AND COSTS, AND TO CONFIRM SPECTRAL WAVELENGTHS AND RESOLUTIONS REQUIRED FOR THE ADVANCED SENSOR SYSTEM, NASA PROPOSES FLYING SERIES OF AIRCRAFT MISSIONS LATE FEBRUARY/EARLY MARCH 1978 OVER MEXICO WITH PRESENTLY AVAILABLE SENSOR SYSTEMS. TIMING RELATED TO GROWING PERIOD NOW UNDERWAY. FLIGHTS CAN NOT BE DELAYED TIL NEXT

GROWING SEASON AND STILL MAKE 1980 DEADLINE FOR COMPLETION OF SENSOR DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

3. AIRCRAFT MISSIONS WOULD BE FLOWN IN TWO SEPARATE SERIES:

A. NASA HIGH ALTITUDE U-2 PHOTOGRAPHY MISSION (THREE TO FOUR FLIGHTS) TO BE FLOWN ASAP OVER TEST AREA TO ACQUIRE PHOTOGRAPHIC BASE WHICH WILL BE USED FOR NAVIGATIONAL PURPOSES AND FOR LOCATING FIELDS IN RELATION TO MAP FEATURES DURING SECOND SERIES OF FLIGHTS.

B. SUBSEQUENT SERIES OF 4 FLIGHTS BY NASA E-18 BEECHCRAFT AIRCRAFT EQUIPPED WITH FIVE-CHANNEL MULTI-SPECTRAL SENSORS AND ZEISS MAPPING CAMERA OVER TEST AREA NEAR CULIACAN SINOLA TO ACQUIRE DATA NEEDED FOR ADVANCED SENSOR DEVELOPMENT EFFORT.

4. PRIMARY TEST SITE WITHIN AREA BOUNDED BY POINTS 27 DEGREES 46 MINUTES NORTH, 110 DEGREES 10 MINUTES WEST; 30 DEGREES 10 MINUTES NORTH; 107 DEGREES 20 MINUTES WEST; 23 DEGREES 12 MINUTES NORTH; 105 DEGREES 27 MINUTES WEST; 25 DEGREES 34 MINUTES NORTH, 102 DEGREES 38 MINUTES WEST.

5. U-2 AIRCRAFT IS USAF-OWNED, NASA MAINTAINED AND CONFIDENTIAL

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OPERATED WITH REGISTRY NUMBER 56-6682 PRIMARY OR 56-6681 SECONDARY; CALL SIGN NASA 709 OR 708. AIRCRAFT WOULD STAGE AND RECOVER FROM TUCSON, ARIZONA OR ELLINGTON AFB, TEXAS. AIRCRAFT HAS CREW OF ONE AMONG JAMES BARNES, ROLAND R. WILLIAMS, PRIMARY PILOTS, BOTH U.S. CIVILIANS. MEXICAN GROUND OBSERVATION OF U-2 OPERATIONS AND SUBSEQUENT DATA HANDLING IS WELCOMED. AERIAL PHOTOS WILL BE PROCESSED AT NASA AMES RESEARCH CENTER IN CALIFORNIA AND MADE AVAILABLE TO MEXICAN GOVERNMENT.

6. BEECHCRAFT E-18 AIRCRAFT IS NASA-LEASED FROM HAMILTON AVIATION, FAA SERIAL NO. BA 155, CALL SIGN NASA 948. AIRCRAFT CARRIES CREW OF 4, ALL U.S. CIVILIANS. AIRCRAFT WOULD STAGE AND RECOVER FROM TUCSON, ARIZONA. MEXICAN PARTICIPATION DURING GROUND OPERATIONS E-18 FLIGHTS AND SUBSEQUENT DATA PROCESSING IS WELCOMED. IN CASE OF EMERGENCY OR REFUELING, REQUEST PERMISSION TO LAND AT HERMOSILLO, MEXICO. DATA WILL BE PROCESSED AT SLIDELL, LOUISIANA AND MADE AVAILABLE TO GOM.

7. FLIGHTS MUST BE CONCLUDED WITHIN NEXT MONTH TO BE EFFECTIVE.

8. ACTUAL DATES OF ALL FLIGHTS DEPENDENT ON WEATHER AND
E-18 MISSION TIED TO PROCESSING TIME OF U-2 PHOTOS. THIS

EXPECTED TO TAKE 24 HOURS FOR EACH OF THE U-2 MISSIONS.
ONE MISSION PER DAY WILL BE FLOWN FOR ALL 7 OR 8 FLIGHTS.

9. PILOTS WILL FILE INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT PLANS FOR EACH
FLIGHT.

10. U.S. TEAM WILL ARRIVE FEB 20 IN MEXICO CITY TO DIS-
CUSS THIS CLEARANCE REQUEST WITH GOM IN HOPE THAT
APPROVAL CAN BE EXPEDITED (SUBJECT SEPTTEL)

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11. REQUEST EMBASSY OBTAIN NECESSARY CLEARANCE FOR
7 OR 8 FLIGHTS BY TWO AIRCRAFT IN PERIOD 22 FEB TO 15
MARCH AND ADVISE. VANCE

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